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Dan Macauley*

SAM,
THE PIROOTER

DAN, MACAULEY

LOYAL LEGION BANQUET, CINCINNATI, OHIO,

February 10th, 1886



SAM,
THE PIROOTER

DAN. MACAULEY

LOYAL LEGION BANQUET, CINCINNATI, OHIO.

February 16th, 1886

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SAM,

THE

PIROOTER.

“THE PRIVATE SOLDIER AS A FORAGER.”

(WIT AND WISDOM IN THE RANKS.)

“Peace kind o’, sort o’, suits my diet,
When wimmen does my cookin’ for me ;
They wasn’t overly much pie et,
Durin’ the army.”

[*Companion Gen. DAX. MACAULEY, Ohio Commandery,
Columbus, O.*]

I thank you most cordially for your complimentary invitation of to-night, regretting, however, that I have nothing better to offer than a “twice-told tale.” I can’t help feeling a little like a newly-drafted man among old veterans, in endeavoring to entertain my Companions of the Loyal Legion after my drifting life of the past several years, separated from such associations until all I ever knew or heard of soldier experiences has about dried and mummified within me.

And if I should entangle military movements with

hotel rates, or the price of beans with golden glories, you will attribute it, I trust, to intense application to new duties the past half year.

“Reading and writing,” Dogberry says, “come by nature ;” but hotel keeping is an infliction of the Evil One, the price of which is eternal vigilance and occasional incursions into the very suburbs of profanity. This is, however, as the Irishman says, “sub rosa and above board.”

If my effort should present to your practiced ears what the boys call “chestnuts,” consider the old proverbs and be wise : “There is nothing new under the sun,” and “You should never look a *gift* chestnut in the wormhole.”

In considering a subject, I have wondered if we haven’t, for a moment at least, sufficiently familiarized ourselves with the more ponderous and famous events and men of the great war. Are there not vast numbers prone, and prompt, and eloquent to write, or sing, or talk of Sherman’s triumphant march to the sea?—Of Sheridan’s dashing ride to glory?—And the imperishable honors of that silent hero who was above all men—

“Patient in toil,
Serene amidst alarms,
Inflexible in faith,
Invincible in arms !”

—the beloved and lamented Grant ?

So let them sing, and speak, and write ; they thrill our hearts and bring to our eyes the tears sacred to such memories alone !

But there are other and lighter themes to which we may turn with a different satisfaction. Camp life, like poverty, made strange companionships ; and when we reflect that every hour had its little history, with tragedy and comedy closely jostling elbows, a thousands items spring up to remind us of the brighter sides of duty, and of the peculiar characters who made us laugh in spite of ourselves throughout the entire war.

I have in mind just such a one—a most unheroic fellow of mine—whose roguish tricks, unconscious wit, and insatiable appetite for mischief and punishment were at once the delight of the regiment and the perpetual despair of the unhappy rascal himself.

I call him “Sam,” partly because it’s an easy name to get hold of, and partly because it really was his name.

I first distinctly remember him at Memphis along about the middle of the war, just as we were getting ready one evening for dress parade. I was standing in front of regimental headquarters with a number of the officers, all in the glory of full uniform, when a green, gawky-looking fellow, evidently one of our new recruits, edged into the party, and with a familiar nod, prodded his thumb into my ribs, saying :

“ Be you Captain o’ Company B ? ”

It was a rather surprising question at that time in the war, when almost every man, woman, and child in the country was familiar with uniforms and badges of rank, and the eagle, perched on my shoulder-strap, was staring him in the face as he spoke. However, I answered, "No, sir."

A faint smile on the faces of the other officers must have raised a doubt in his mind, for he persisted, "Yes, you be !"

"No, sir ; you are mistaken," I said again, and so earnestly that, with a half apologetic grin on his queer face, he responded :

"Be jingo ! they said you be !" and then he faded away backwards into camp among the jokers who had sent him.

And this turned out to be "Sam," who made much of our military life one "vast substantial smile." He never especially meant to be funny, and was rarely known to smile himself ; on the contrary, he seemed as simple and serious in manner as he was cadaverous in appearance. Tall, very slim, freckled and homely, awkward, a born poacher, controlled instantly by his slightest impulse for mischief, and apparently without knowledge of right from wrong, he passed his days between devilment and consequential plunges into spasms of repentance and remorse when confronted, as he was almost daily, by the various punishments in vogue in camp.

I next remember him a short time afterwards in camp, just above New Orleans.

The day of our arrival there a party of some eighty soldiers was marched into quarters for assignment to duty with our regiment. A strange lieutenant had charge of them, and as our adjutant was not present at the moment to call and verify the roll, I took it, and, stepping out in front of the line, called and checked it off myself. While doing so I felt some one, presumably the lieutenant, close behind me, breathing heavily over my shoulder as he watched the interesting process. Name after name I called, with some little haste and annoyance at the face I could feel rather than see, at my shoulder; and as the last response was noted, I turned abruptly to the left, and fairly bumped noses with this same Sam who had so recently insisted that I was Captain of Company "B."

We were standing out alone, at least twenty feet from any others, he staring me in the face with innocent curiosity. I didn't speak, but looked at him steadily until he seemed to realize that one of us at least had committed some impropriety; and, as before, he sought a quiet refuge back among his comrades, who rolled upon the ground laughing at his freshness.

We had scarcely gotten straight in camp and begun to discipline and instruct our new men when an officer arrived from general headquarters to make a close inspection of us as to drill, discipline, and general con-

dition. He gave notice merely by calling at my tent in full paraphernalia with the announcement that he was "ready," and, of course, the Colonel flew around and got the regiment ready also. The inspector was a regular army officer—strict, sharp, and determined to learn in a very brief time all that a searching inspection could reveal.

Anxious for a favorable report from him, I accompanied him through the entire inspection, suggesting and explaining as seemed wise, and when finally through, inviting him to headquarters for such consultation and refreshment as might be profitable and pleasant. The day was exceedingly hot, our uniforms (with sword, belt, and sash) especially burdensome; and as we neared the tent I suggested that we remove our harness and heavy coats, and take things easy awhile, to which he assented, and we walked in, unbuckling our sword-belts.

And there, to my horror, with his little portfolio and writing kit spread out, sat this same atrocious Sam at my desk laboriously writing a letter.

I had been lenient with him heretofore, for I knew his troubles would begin soon enough, and that the military polishing process would be sufficiently rapid and severe without any special aid from me; but this last performance of his upset me. To think that this inspector should find the Colonel's tent apparently a general convenience for the raw recruits was not only

humiliating, but very nearly infuriating, and I mentally marked the obtrusive Sam for early discipline. I presumed that he would immediately withdraw on account of lack of room, if for no other reason; and so, with fine diplomacy, I affected to be very busy taking off my things, chatting feverishly the while with the inspector, and hoping he would suppose it was my clerk so busily engaged.

But I had not yet learned to forecast Sam's probabilities correctly, and he didn't budge.

Seeing that exposure was inevitable, I tapped him on the shoulder, and asked what he was doing there.

"I'm writin'," he answered pleasantly, looking around, but making no effort to move.

"Go out!" I said, pointing the way for him.

"There's room here if you want to write," he argued, as he hitched along and began to concentrate his traps.

"Will you get out?"

"Cap'm Kemper said I could write here," he insisted, and still with no attempt at removal.

"Will you get out of here before I hurt you?" I asked with such emphasis that slowly and sadly he picked up his things, walked to the door of the tent, turned, and with one hand grasping the centre-pole, began:

"Cap'm Kemper"—but I started for him, and he fled.

I often wondered just what he wrote about me when he finished that letter.

For some time after this I lost sight of him, but it was soon apparent that we had a character among us. He passed through his "evolution" from a green recruit into a "soldier," and in this old familiar and somewhat painful process his peculiarities assumed all the progressive importance that he did himself. It began to be known that he was constitutionally opposed to all army rules and regulations inconsistent with his comfort and ideas of personal liberty; and his fame as a "Pirooter"—which meant, in his vernacular, "a feller that could forage in twelve languages, and nary one of 'em dead"—commenced to spread abroad throughout the land. He undoubtedly could and most cheerfully would, have robbed those old masters, "Sherman's bummers," of the very horses they sat upon; and his mania for stealing was only checked by articles too big, or hot, or wet to carry. Anything and everything was his, from an eight-day clock to a Presbyterian pulpit.

Of course, such magnificent talent could not long be wasted in the obscurity of vague and general effort, and so he was soon detailed to steal in a more systematic and official manner for his company officers' mess. It is almost needless to state that they forthwith lived like fighting cocks, while comparative desolation overspread the balance of the camp. Here he

developed the important fact in his composition that it was a solemn point of honor with him never to steal from those with whom he was engaged, while against all the rest of the world the black flag of "pirooting" was up.

It follows naturally that in a little while, in pure self-defense, I detailed him as "Pirooter-in-Chief" of regimental headquarters mess, and then began a struggle for supremacy between Sam and his Colonel, lasting with varying results during the remainder of the war, sometimes one ahead, and sometimes the other leading by a neck.

A few of many incidents may serve to illustrate his character :

Finding him on guard duty one day (extra duty, of course), I stopped and asked him what were his instructions. Halting, facing, and saluting, he gravely informed me they were to let no one cross his beat but "niggers, hogs, and officers."

I looked him long and searchingly in the face, but he returned the gaze with such innocent composure, that I walked on and said no more. And really, as I thought it over, he was not so far wrong after all. Our colored hewers of wood and drawers of water were necessarily under less restriction than our soldiers, and were permitted by the nature of their duties to cross camp lines wherever most convenient. I never heard of a sentinel who wouldn't let a hog cross his

line, at least *into* camp, and, of course, officers were privileged as he said. It was his manner of expressing it, and the invidious order of classification that startled me at first.

Once while writing in my tent, a big, muscular soldier came up and asked :

“Oh, Colonel, if a man called you so-and-so, what would you do?”

I was quite busy, and merely raised my head to answer briefly :

“I’d knock him down,” and continued my writing. It wasn’t long before Sam came to me, and a most woeful-looking object he was. Battered, bruised and bloody, muddy and scratched, and with every appearance of having passed through a great crisis too suddenly, he blubbered out his bitter complaint of the man who had so effectually thrashed him ; but more bitter and grievous was his censure of me for having given him—as the fellow swore to Sam—permission to do it.

“I kin stand the lickin’, Colonel,” he sobbed, “but to think you’d put it up on me so is what breaks my heart !”

Forgetting the brief but pointed consultation of a few moments before, I indignantly denied the charge ; but explanations followed, and Sam became in time reconciled, not only to the Colonel, but the whipping also.

He had figured up the exact number of days he had to serve, and early every morning would mount some stump or box and yell out to the whole camp the record :

“Only 427 days to serve !” or whatever the number happened to be.

At one time, when we were under a rather severe musketry fire, Sam was heard to whine out most piteously :

“Oh, Lord, don’t I wish I was in my father’s old barn !”

Why he should wish to be in that peculiar place just then aroused curiosity, and some one asked him “why ?”

“To see how blamed quick I’d get into the house !” he chuckled.

Some old copies of a comic paper, called *Budget of Fun*, were much read in camp in those days, and I quietly enjoyed Sam’s quaint use of its name as we marched along one afternoon. As we passed a wagon train, he sung out cheerily to one of the teamsters :

“Say, don’t you want a *Budget of Fun* ?”

“Yes,” was promptly answered.

“Take this one,” said Sam, as he shied his heavy knapsack into the wagon for the teamster to carry.

We were once on an expedition far into the enemy’s lines, and the orders against foraging were absolute and peremptory. The troops were so instructed by

general notification, while to Sam I felt it necessary to privately read the riot act in italics.

The next day, riding out to the picket line, and turning a sharp corner in the road, I met the argus fingered rogue face to face, riding a remarkable caricature of a horse which he had managed to "achieve" somewhere. In front of him was a large box or bundle closely wrapped in his blanket, and hugged in both arms, while he held the bridle in his teeth.

He nearly fell off his horse as he met me, tried to salute, dropped his bridle, clutched at the box and falling blanket, and away he dashed, covered with bees from the hive he had stolen, and yelling like a Modoc.

He came to me once with his gun, and asked meekly what he should do with it.

"Clean it," I suggested.

"No, I don't mean that," he said; "but where shall I put it? My time is out, and I'd like to have you make out my discharge."

"Your discharge! You lunatic! Why, you've got a year and a half to serve!"

"Yes, I know about that; but you see, Colonel, you've had me on double duty the last year or so, and I thought maybe that ought to let me out now," and then he marched away with a hurt expression at so plain a proposition being questioned.

When our regiment "veteranized," or re-enlisted

for the second and final three years of the war, I noticed that Sam's name was not put down, as from day to day the list was rapidly growing.

Asking him why he hesitated, and if he really intended to leave us, I discussed the matter with him,

"You know very well that if you go home you'll not stay there ten days; you will certainly enlist in some command, and so why not stay with your old comrades of the 11th?"

"Well, Colonel," he drawled, as he pulled out some printed papers: "if you'll figure up this bounty and stuff allowed them veterans, you'll see it amounts to jist four hundred and two dollars."

I assented.

"Well, sir, the trouble's here. I know jist exactly what to do with that four hundred dollars; but, by thunder, them two dollars gits me; and I don't know what on airth to do with 'em."

It is a fact which others will probably remember, and which I cannot explain, that in a few days later versions of those orders arrived, summing up exactly, as I presume was originally intended, an even four hundred dollars, and at once I called for Sam, showed him that the fatal two dollars no longer stood between himself and imperishable fame, and he immediately signed the roll. Of course the fellow meant from the first to re-enlist, but could only do it in his own peculiar way.

One winter we were for many days on a Mississippi River expedition down below Helena, Arkansas, with a fleet of steamers under Gen. Willis A. Gorman. The weather was most inclement and the men suffered very severely from cold and exposure. Under such conditions a soldier's bump of reverence for anything he can worry suffers great shrinkage. Sam had taken a violent dislike to General Gorman, because, forsooth, that gallant gentleman had been forced to join in the famous retreat from the first Bull Run battlefield.

Why Sam should have considered that General Gorman had any special monopoly or responsibility in that great national foot-race, or that he had developed more speed than was absolutely necessary to keep up with the procession, is hard to understand ; but so it was, and several times during this expedition, as I afterwards learned, when our steamers were sufficiently near, Sam would electrify the General by howling at him most derisively :

“ Hello ! Old Bull Run ! ”

Once he made a mistake. Headquarters steamer was brought alongside of ours and within a few feet for consultation, and on the upper or hurricane deck stood the General himself.

Sam was on the lower forward deck of our vessel, out near the bow, and, bracing himself, he yelled up into Gorman's very teeth :

“Hello ! Old Bull Run !”

The General was too quick for him : leaning over the side, he shouted down to the guard : “Throw that man on my boat here ! Quick !” And sure enough they did. Sam, sprawling through the air like a frog, was pitched headlong on to Gorman’s boat, and during the remainder of the day, at various distances, near and far, we could see him, long and lank and lean, tied up like a fluttering scarecrow to the jack-staff of the steamer. It was a cold and gusty day—for Sam—and no especial attention was paid to waffles and quail for him (“pirooting” being temporarily paralyzed with its chief apostle); and so, when along towards night the boats were brought together again, and he was chucked back to us stiff as a wooden Indian, it might reasonably be supposed that for once the Great Irrepressible was squelched.

No, not the least in the world.

He gathered himself together, and—chilled, blue, and starved as he was, came creaking and grunting up stairs to me in the cabin.

“Colonel,” he groaned, “I wish you’d please have my discharge made out right away.”

“Your discharge ! you pluperfect villain ! Your funeral, you mean, if you’re not more careful !”

“No, my discharge, Colonel. I’ve been put on GORMAN’S STAFF !”

Down-stairs, a few moments later, he made a fam-

ishing raid on a little close corporation of the boys sitting on the floor around a frugal meal of coffee, hard-tack, and s. b., loudly declaring the paradox :

“I’m going to eat at the first table if I have to wait.”

Failing to break the circle from any direction, he suddenly ceased trying, and affected to notice in amazement what they were eating.

“Well,” he said, “I don’t believe mule tail stuffed with soger buttons is good for freckles, anyhow.”

When I asked later how he felt when first thrown on to Gorman’s boat, he said most solemnly :

“Colonel, awful. I give you my word, I thought he’d a killed me, and, by jingo, you’d a starved if he had. Well, sir, when they got them ropes out, my heart thumped like a potato in a wooden shoe. I thought Old Bull Run was goin’ to hang me sure!”

While we were stationed at Helena, Ark., on the bank of the Mississippi, a couple of new regiments—the 22d and 24th Iowa—came to us by steamer direct from home. They were a gallant set of men, new, bright, and fresh, and possessed of camp outfits of stupendous elegance. They had not yet experienced any of the miseries of that fell destroyer of luxury, lack of transportation, and so were regarded as fine sport for plucking by old veterans of very little worldly gear and less conscience, and if a number of us officers had not combined to put a stop to it, they

would have been looted as bare as a modern ballet troupe. My tent at that time was up on top of the levee, and one bright moonlight night about midnight, I was aroused by a mysterious shuffling and whispering near the back of the tent towards town, where the new regiments were encamped.

"Easy, boys," I could hear in stage whispers. "Easy! Thunder! Do you want to wake the Colonel? Steady now! All together! Easy! Step light—sh-h-h!" and knowing that something contraband would pass the door of my tent in a moment, I stepped from bed and waited. Some six or eight of our old soldiers came carefully tip-toeing past, lugging a gigantic company mess box, just stolen from one of the Iowa camps, the whole enterprise under the management of its natural guide, counsellor, and friend, the redoubtable Sam.

"Good evening, gentlemen," I said affectionately; "much obliged! Set it right down here, and go to bed; you look tired. Good-night;" and away they sneaked, full of trouble and unrest. Next morning, after guard mounting, I sent for Sam, and had him call up his fellow-villains in front of headquarters, where they stood in line, silent and abashed, awaiting their doom. Sam eyed me with eager interest as I sent for a guard and the martial, or "sheep-skin" band, until at last a glimmer of the dreadful truth swept through his guilty mind. His face deepened

and his eyes opened wider, until at last he burst forth in an agony of perspiring supplication.

"Say, Colonel! wot in thunder are you goin' to do to me?"

The whole camp, out to see the fun, roared with delight, as it was announced that they were to march back to that Iowa camp with the mess box under guard and with the band at the head.

"You'll probably have a warm reception," I added encouragingly.

"Oh, Lord!" he groaned, as he turned white and gasped for breath at the awful prospect. The picture of the great "Pirooter" and his veteran cronies marching into that jeering, jibing camp of raw recruits to return stolen property in broad daylight to the tune of the "Rogue's March," with the whole post laughing at them, almost made him frantic.

"Oh! say, Colonel, Lord! You wouldn't do that to me! would you, OLD PARD?" was wrung from the very bottom of his heart.

The Recording Angel, aghast at the endearing phrase, so breachy of military etiquette, nevertheless sponged out the "old pard" under the charitable mantle of extenuating circumstances.

I learned afterwards that it was a fortunate thing for Sam that the guard was along; for no sooner had the procession left our camp than the elastic rogue boldly pretended to be in command of the party, issued

orders, scolded his fellows for not marching to suit him, and when in the Iowa camp, "formed himself into a hollow square!" as he proclaimed and made a mock presentation speech, which gave both great amusement and offense to the astonished recipients. He claimed that he and his coparceners had raised the money by popular subscription to buy the mess chest now presented, and after a rambling harangue, half malicious and altogether funny, as described to me at the time, he wound up with a remark that nearly provoked attack on the whole party. It was to the effect that whenever during our marches yet to come he should see sitting by the roadside tender-footed and weary stragglers of this regiment, with the "24" on their caps, it would always delight and cheer him, for he would then know to a dead certainty that there wasn't an enemy or a particle of danger within "24" miles!

He tried to get as nearly even as possible with the regiment that had been the innocent cause of his disgrace by owning what he called a "sugar-coated mess box," and the guard was glad to get away with him and themselves undamaged.

"Colonel," said Sam to me one day, "may I ask you a conundrum?"

"Fire away, Sam."

"If either you or me had to be killed in battle, which one ought it to be?"

“Well, Sam, I should make a vigorous effort to spare you if I had to choose.”

“Now, Colonel, that’s where you’re dead wrong ; for I can stand grief a great deal better than you kin—I’m used-er to it.”

Once while devising a new and more soul-searching punishment for some aggravated rascality of his, I held a brief session of remonstrance with him.

“In the name of patience,” I said, “what am I to do with you? Won’t you ever behave, or shall I have to spike and abandon you at last?”

“Well, Colonel,” he replied, reflectively, “I’m a cuss, ain’t I? I dunno what’s best to do with me, or, honest injun, I’d tell you. Sometimes I think you can’t do anything, and maybe we’d better give up tryin’.”

“No, no,” I said, “let’s keep on experimenting ; we may strike something yet.”

“All right, if you think so ; as the Irishman said, “You’re wrong, but I’m wid you,” he assented. I then explained to him that a probable mistake of mine was in always placing him on extra duty of an active kind, such as chopping wood, carrying a knapsack full of stones, digging a ditch, and the like—all of which energetic exercises he seemed to enjoy and thrive upon.

“Now,” said I, “how would you like to stand still and not work or move around at all? Could you do it?”

He didn't know—it was a new idea to him— but he was perfectly willing to give it a fair trial.

There was an old sugar hogshead, with one head in, standing near; so I had him roll it up in front of my tent a little to one side, turn it up and mount it. I had seen him most admirably strike the position of the Henry Clay statue in New Orleans—left hand behind him, right extended as if in debate, and head thrown well back; so I had him do it on the improvised pedestal. He could hardly conceal his delight at the novelty of it, but, knowing the restless creature as I did, I thought it would soon wear off. The day was a scorcher; the flies were buzzing after the sugar remaining in the hogshead, and the monotony of the thing I judged would soon dampen his newly-awakened artistic ardor, so I left him alone in his glory while I went into my tent to do some writing. The statue soon attracted attention, and I could hear the boys asking what he was doing there, to which he responded in confidential tone that the Colonel was paying him fifty cents an hour to ornament his tent as a fancy hitching post. Adjoining our regiment at that time was the Forty-sixth Indiana, under that glorious "Old Shrimp," as he was nicknamed, Colonel T. H. Bringhurst. A couple of his men, at a loss for mischief, had effectually created it by solemnly insisting that they could no longer keep step in marching! They could not have hit upon a more ingenious method of

producing the greatest possible confusion on drill or parade, and their little circus had been running a day or two with immense success, about the time Sam introduced the Henry Clay act.

They were not apparently stubborn or ugly, but most absurdly protested, in all regretful earnest, that they had actually forgotten how to keep step, and couldn't recover it as yet ! Remonstrance and punishment were of no avail ; but the ingenious Bringhurst rose to the occasion as follows : Laying down a "hard tack" box the flat way, he cut holes for the heads of the two men, their arms coming out through the sides ; then standing them closely crowded together, and facing the same way, one behind the other, he fitted the cracker box down tightly on them, and, putting a man with a bayonet behind them, gave the order to "march !"

The thing worked to a charm. They not only marched, but they kept step perfectly ; they couldn't do anything else, in fact, and not fall down. They were willing to quit long before their Colonel was ; but the curious looking thing marched around camp hour after hour with an unanimity of legs beautiful to see. Several times, as the "Siamesed" culprits came around our way, they unloaded some of their wrath at long range on Sam by asking disrespectful questions of him, which he treated with scornful indifference,

until at last he shut them up with one, yelled out so both regiments could hear :

"Say, when are you fellers all goin' to draw them new-fangled jackets?"

In a little while the tiresome position, the heat, and the flies wearied Sam ; and, putting his hand up to the side of his mouth, he called into the tent to me in a loud whisper :

"Oh, Colonel ! You've got me now, by Cain."

It wasn't long before his uneasiness in stamping off the flies loosened the head of the old hogshhead, and he broke through. Of course, this terminated the Henry Clay business ; but in other respects Sam was worse off than before. The hogshhead was about breast high, and kept the occupant sultry, while the flies simply rallied by the million !

"Oh ! Colonel !" he whispered in agony, "I'm licked ! Let up, won't you ? You've got me this time, sure ! Next time I cut up you jist jump stiff-legged on me, if you'll quit now !"

"All right, Sam ; don't worry. I'll be out in an hour or so ; it's too good a thing to let go off suddenly !"

While he thus fretted and perspired, our old Brigadier-General, McGinnis, came strolling down to see me with a letter in his hand from home concerning one of our men. I offered to send for him into company quarters, but the General suggested that we walk

down into camp and see him ourselves, and so we started.

Outside of the tent he changed his mind, saying, "I'll wait here, Mack ; you go down and see about it yourself."

When I returned in a few moments I found the General standing off some ten feet from Sam's hogshead, and regarding him with intense interest, his face crimsoned with suppressed laughter, which he could only control with the aid of one hand helping to hold his mouth in shape, while the innocent Sam seemed gravely unconscious of the existence of anything on earth.

"Where did you catch that?" the General asked. "What is it?"

I told him.

"Well, he's a character," he said, and then informed me that during my brief absence, and not especially noticing Sam, he had placed his hand on the edge of the hogshead, leaning there awaiting my return, when Sam instantly tapped him on the shoulder and ordered him in the most positive terms to remove his hand.

"Take your hand off, sir ; don't touch it ! The Colonel has put me here to guard this hogshead !"

And so, with varying fortunes and a myriad of haps and mishaps beyond the power of man to recall, stumbled on the erratic Sam to final discharge at the

end of the war, a firm believer that he was born to ill luck, yet also of the unalterable opinion that he had been largely instrumental in putting down the great rebellion.

His first ambition after discharge was to be City Treasurer of Indianapolis, failing in which, he took to the less perilous business of tin-roofing.

Once I saw him on the very pinnacle of a tall church steeple, with his legs around the spire, one arm clutching the top ornament ! while he hammered away with the other. So frightful a position had attracted quite a crowd upon the sidewalk, and I stopped to look, not recognizing who the daring climber was. He ceased work for a moment and, after a careful survey of our little assemblage, yelled out to me :

“Say, Colonel ! Don’t it make you dizzy to look up here ?”

A characteristic freak of Sam’s was, that inasmuch as he had not been consulted about my brevet promotion from the Colonelcy late in the war, he never recognized it, and so I always remained “Colonel” to him.

Occasionally he would disappear for months, and nearly always turn up with such tales and evidences of distress that the Colonel’s pocket was bound to be tapped according to the degree of trouble : and so we drifted along, dividing salary with considerable regularity for quite a number of years. Once, while holding city court, some mysterious prisoner insisted on

forwarding pleas of "guilty" from the city jail of any crime with which we might see fit to charge him, but positively refusing to come into court, unless "fetched," and so I sent for him.

To my sorrow, it was the unhappy Sam, under a charge of misappropriation of chickens—a joke in olden days, but now christened by a name of graver character.

He had been taken red-handed in the act, and the furious complainant was in court howling for blood, justice, and revenge. I must have looked rather seriously into the appealing face of my old "Pirooter," for he actually blushed, and with tears in his eyes begged me to kill him for so disgracing the old regiment.

Justice is said to be blind, and I trust she never saw exactly what became of that case. Sam, with many repentant tears—and another division of salary—started for the Shenandoah Valley to reside, while I occupied the subsequent few weeks in trying to explain the matter to my constituent who had lost the chickens.

I never saw Sam again, but I heard often from him.

Poor fellow! Evil days fell upon him, never more to rise, it seems, during his troubled life.

His letters followed me to the uttermost parts of my pilgrimages—from the knobs of Kentucky to the mountains of old Mexico—from "Alpha to Omaha," his dear old sprawling fist, with its many curious im-

pediments of spelling, delighted or grieved me, as his funny nature or perplexities of misfortune asserted themselves.

In a moment of beer and confidence he had married—poor girl—and in time was surrounded by a little squad of “Pirooters,” each one named after me, or approximately thereto, so far as changes could be rung to accommodate numbers and sex.

But with all his poverty and “Rip Van Winkle-ish” improvidence, I am sure he was a gentle father, and that his wife and babies loved him dearly. I am satisfied he was a hero to them, as he told them “bouncers” of his part in the big war, when he fought amid the waving of the banners and the shouting of the captains! And I don’t doubt that he bragged heroically, and with many loving lies, of the daring prowess of his “Old Pard,” the Colonel.

My picture, he wrote me once, hung on the walls of his little cabin, near Harrisonburg, in the lovely valley of the Shenandoah, where he had fought and marauded so many years before, and “Mack,” as his eldest hopeful was called, loved it and could call its name.

“Mary Daniels,” he wrote (my wife’s name is Mary), “is home from school on account of bad shoes” (“BAD SHOES” heavily underscored). “She is fat and chubby, and we all hope to see you here some happy day. Won’t you ever come, Colonel, and

see the old battle-fields, and stop with me in my little home?"

Of course, there could be but one response to such letters and we always made it. The Colonel's wife, with affectionate heart, would say when she read them, tearful and funny as they always were :

"Well, let's fix them up again;" and if we sometimes did it out of a scant abundance, they never knew it.

When he heard, last year, that I was appointed Pension Examiner, he promptly wrote me for a large pension with full arrearages and allowances. He didn't claim it upon any ground of disability, but merely because he wanted it :

"Please send it as soon as possible," he said, "and you bet we'll have an old-time picnic."

When he read that I had gone into the hotel business, he instantly notified me that if ever in all the world I needed a "Pirooter," it was now ; and Heaven only knows how nearly right he was, and what a narrow escape my neighbors have had.

The last time I heard from Sam directly was by postal card a few months ago. He wrote as follows, barring the spelling :

"My dear Colonel, I have just this minute made a wonderful discovery of a preparation for cleaning teeth. Make a paste of emery dust and sweet oil, rub well with a brush, and wash clean with kerosene. Make no mistake—I mean the teeth of a circular saw !"

Only this and nothing more. I don't know where or how he picked up the vigorous idea, but his announcement of it to me was peculiarly Sam-ish.

It is with something more akin to a sorrowful duty than in any spirit of mere fun that I have evoked from the eventful past, with its faint and distant sounds of drums and marching, this remembrance of Sam. It was thrust upon me the other day, by the following item in the *Ohio State Journal*. I think by it that Sam, poor fellow! oppressed by the responsibilities of my hotel venture, had started to tramp his way to join forces with me, and fell, as many a greater man has fallen before, almost in sight of the Promised Land. It is headed :

INSTANTLY KILLED,

and read as follows :

[Special to the *Ohio State Journal*.]

NELSONVILLE, O.—To-day, Samuel Irick, of Harrisonburg, Va., while painting the newly erected school-house, fell from a ladder fifty feet, killing him instantly.

And so he met his fate at last !

Surely there were the widow's grief and the sore hearts of children in the little Shenandoah home that fatal day !

In the great hereafter we know not who shall be advanced nor who shall outrank the other. The Colonel may be last, and the "Pirooter" lead the

van. But should Sam be in glory, and his old commander fail to draw that blissful prize, he would bring me a canteen of water—yes, of milk and honey—if he had to steal it from the very precincts of the throne itself!

Under the eternal law of compensation, it is in every family the cripple or the sickly one that is the most beloved because the most needy ; and it is around the humblest and weakest of our fellow-soldiers who helped us save a great Republic that we need to stand the firmest, and of whom it must never be truthfully said, that—

“When danger’s rife, and war is nigh,
‘God and the Soldier’s’ all the cry!
When danger’s o’er, and wrong is righted,
God is forgot, the soldier slighted!”







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